

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Need for Action

Background of the Special Resource Study

Overview

Homestead, Pennsylvania,¹ was once synonymous with the steel industry. The Homestead Steel Works, established in 1881 by the Pittsburgh Bessemer Steel Company and purchased by Andrew Carnegie in 1883, was once the largest steel plant in the country. The Works were located in Allegheny County, approximately seven miles southeast of Pittsburgh and stretched along both banks of the Monongahela River. On the south bank, the Works included the boroughs of Homestead, West Homestead and Munhall extending four miles and on the north bank, it included the boroughs of Swissvale and Rankin for a distance of nearly a mile.

The Works became the focus of national attention when a violent clash between labor and manage-

ment, known as the Battle of Homestead, occurred there during the summer of 1892. The Battle stands for both the high-water mark of craft unionism and the onset of the nearly 50-year non-union period in the steel industry. Subsequently, under Carnegie's dynamic leadership, the Homestead Steel Works was expanded during the 1890s when Carnegie Steel bought the Carrie Furnace Plant, with its two existing iron furnaces – Carrie Nos. 1 and 2. In 1901, the company linked the Carrie Furnace Plant to its Homestead Works with the construction of the Hot Metal Bridge to transport molten iron in ladle cars across the Monongahela River. Later in 1901, Carnegie sold the Homestead Works and Carrie Furnaces to J.P. Morgan, and it became part of the U.S. Steel Corporation, the nation's first billion-dollar company. Although eclipsed in size by the turn of the century by the construction of new steel plants, the Homestead Steel Works remained the largest in the Pittsburgh area during the twentieth

1902 Lithograph. Rivers of Steel.



century.

Following a twenty-year decline, downsizing began at the Homestead Steel Works in the 1970s. In 1978, the Carrie Blast Furnace plant was shut down and many structures were demolished, leaving only the Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 and related structures on the site. As competition from foreign steel mills increased and the market for heavy steel products collapsed during the early 1980s, USX (successor of U.S. Steel) closed the Homestead Steel Works in 1986. The property was sold to the Park Corporation, which shortly began demolition of mill structures for scrap and to clear the site for redevelopment. Over 250 acres were cleared, leaving the Pump House, the adjacent water tower, and twelve brick stacks on the site. In the past several years, a major mixed use complex known as the Waterfront has been developed on the site of the steel works and includes numerous big box stores, movie theatres, restaurants, and housing.

The history of the site is powerfully intertwined with nationally significant stories. These include the growth of the steel industry and its role in the nation's economy, the evolution of the labor movement, and the development of immigrant ethnic communities that grew up around this pivotal plant. The demolition of the majority of the Homestead Works at the center of the study area and its replacement by mixed use contemporary development have detracted from the integrity and legibility of the setting as defined by the individual resources considered as part of this study. Despite

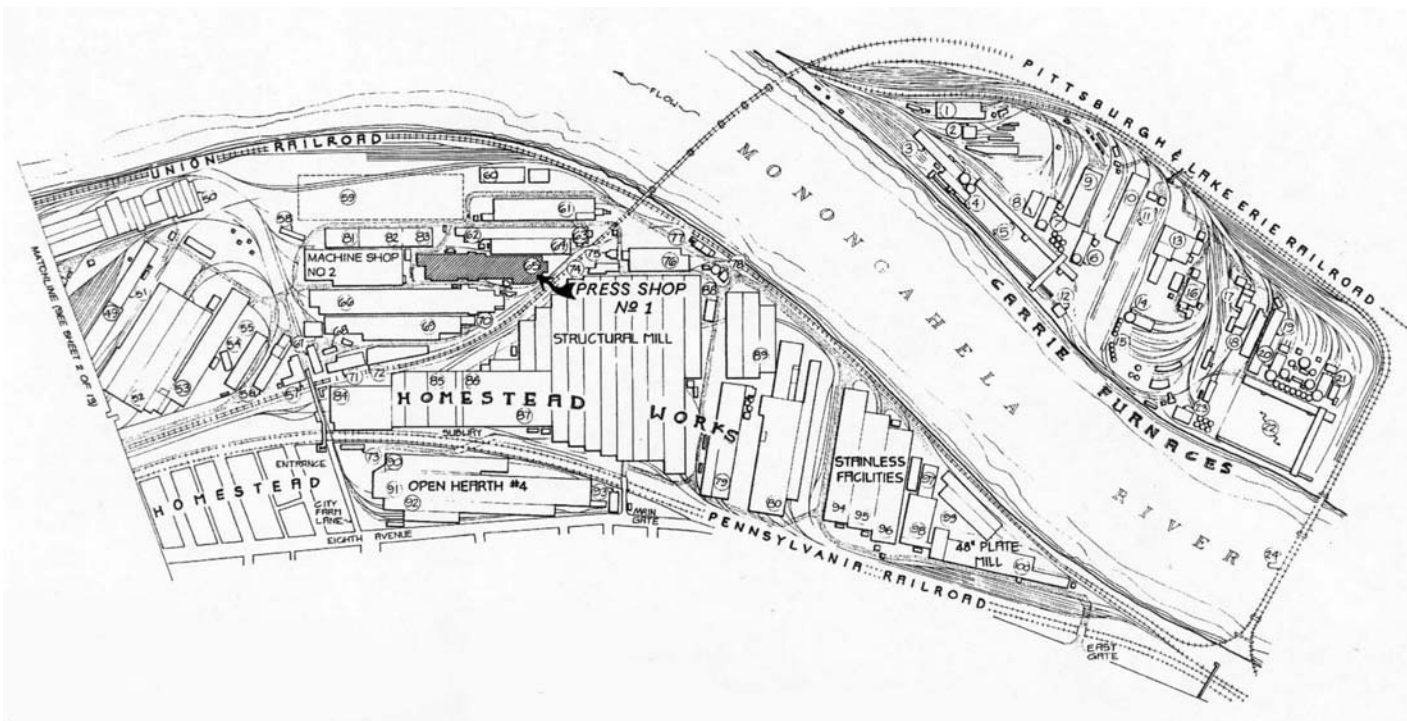
the loss of integrity of the setting, the key individual resources, including one National Historic Landmark, and other sites and districts of importance, have the potential to illustrate Homestead's nationally significant stories and themes, which are not communicated by other sites in the National Park System or by other agencies or the private sector.

Past Evaluations

The importance of the resources was recognized as early as 1989 when demolition of the steel works got underway. The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a branch of the National Park Service (NPS), began a campaign to record the Homestead Works and other steel mills in the Lower Monongahela Valley that were closing due to de-industrialization. HAER maintained a field office at Homestead for four years, recording with measured drawings, photographs, and narrative histories the Homestead Works, National-Duquesne Works at Duquesne and McKeesport, and the Edgar Thomson Works at Braddock, as well as documenting other aspects of the valley's steel industry.²

In 1988, the Steel Industry Heritage Task Force, a nonprofit organization, was formed to conserve the culture of steel communities and preserve parts of the mills for adaptive reuse and as a potential heritage park. This group evolved into the Steel Industry Heritage Corporation (SIHC) in 1990 and gained support from communities, civic groups, regional foundations, and from local, state and

Map of Homestead Works.
HAER photograph.



federal governments. The SIHC succeeded in preserving parts of the Homestead Steel Works including: the 1899 48" universal plate mill, which was moved and placed in storage; the 12,000 ton forging press, which remains approximately *in situ*; the remains of the 1892 Battle of Homestead site, including the rehabilitated Pump House; Carrie Furnaces Nos. 6 and 7; and the Hot Metal Bridge spanning the Monongahela River between the Carrie and the Homestead Works sites.³

Other preservation efforts targeted non-industrial properties in the Homestead area that were typically associated with the steel works. A nomination for the Homestead National Register Historic District was submitted to the National Register of Historic Places and was approved June 10, 1990.

Further recognition of the importance of steel-related cultural resources in Homestead and surrounding areas came in 1996 with the designation of the Rivers of Steel Heritage Area by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Concurrently, this seven-county area bordering the Monongahela, Allegheny, Youghiogheny, Ohio and Beaver Rivers was designated the Steel Industry National Heritage Area (later changed to "Rivers of Steel") by the United States Congress in 1996.⁴

In the fall of 1998, a National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination was submitted for the Bost Building (which was the meeting place of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers in Homestead and the place where the Advisory Committee representing the eight Iron and Steel Worker Lodges met during the 1892 strike/lockout). The Secretary of the Interior designated the site as a NHL in January 1999.

Several attempts have been initiated to seek designation of additional properties associated with Homestead as NHLs; to date these efforts have not been successful. A submission for NHL designation was submitted for the Battle of Homestead Landing site, including the river landing and the Pump House, in July 1998. The site was denied NHL designation because of a lack of integrity. A NHL nomination was drafted for Carrie Furnace Nos. 6 and 7 in December 1998 and tabled pending re-examination of the boundaries. The NHL nomination was resubmitted but was not acted upon due to questions about the context of the site and its relationship to other comparable sites elsewhere.

SRS and Environmental Assessment Purpose

This document is a Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment (SRS/EA) of the Battle of Homestead site and adjacent resources in the vicinity of Homestead and the Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 area. The study was authorized in fiscal year 1999 in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, House of Representatives Committee Report 105-609.

The purpose of the Battle of Homestead and Carrie Furnaces SRS/EA is to evaluate cultural resources in Homestead, West Homestead, Munhall, Swissvale and Rankin, Pennsylvania, for possible inclusion in the National Park System and also to determine the degree and kind of federal actions that may be desirable for the management and protection of this area, if it is considered to have potential for addition to the system. In order for the area to potentially be designated part of the National Park System, it must meet four criteria: national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management. The study evaluates the resources according to these criteria.

A **statement of significance** was developed by evaluating the area and the proposed sites in the contexts of steel making, labor, and community history in the United States. An **assessment of suitability** was developed by comparing the study area's resources to other themes and resources already represented by the National Park System and other public and private agencies. A **feasibility assessment** was prepared which considered such factors as cost, threats, long-term protection of the resources, and potential public use of the area and its resources. Fourth, an evaluation of the **need for direct NPS management** as opposed to effective management by other agencies or organizations was conducted. The assessments of significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management are described in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. The key finding of this study is that the resources do not fully meet the required criteria for designation as a unit of the National Park System.

The study includes **management alternatives** that define alternate approaches to the protection, interpretation and management of the sites and weighs the impacts and benefits of each alternative.

The study process involved public scoping, historical research, review of previous National Register and National Historic Landmark nominations, and review of existing plans including the Rivers of



Bost Building, prior to rehabilitation. National Park Service photograph

Bost Building, 2002, after rehabilitation. Rivers of Steel photograph.

Steel National Heritage Area Management Plan and other local initiatives in the study area.

After public review and comment on this SRS/EA, a report, which incorporates response to public comments, will provide Congress with information about the quality and condition of the resources, their relationship to the assessment criteria, and recommendations regarding implementation of ideas and alternatives.

General Description of Resources

Study Area Location

The study area for the SRS centers on sites associated with the former Homestead Steel Works, including the Carrie Furnaces site, along the Monongahela River. The area is in Allegheny County, up river from Pittsburgh. Figure 1 shows the Homestead vicinity and its position along the Monongahela River.

The communities that have historic relationships with the Homestead Steel Works and Carrie Furnaces are West Homestead, Homestead, Munhall, Swissvale and Rankin. The resources that are under consideration for this study are all located within the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

Resources on the south bank of the river include the Bost Building and the Battle of Homestead site located in Homestead borough, and the Homestead National Historic District and associated structures located in Homestead, West Homestead and Munhall boroughs. Resources on the north bank include Carrie Furnaces Nos. 6 & 7 and the Hot Metal Bridge.

Access to the study area is provided through State Route 885 connecting south from Interstate Highway 376 and extending west to Pittsburgh. Eighth Avenue in Homestead is the primary east-west route paralleling the river and provides access to the study area and resources located south of the river. The Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 are not readily accessible as they are currently in private ownership and are isolated from the adjacent community by railroad tracks and circuitous access by road. The Hot Metal Bridge is not open to the public.

Figure 2 shows key resources in the Homestead vicinity.

Resource Description

The study resources include a cross section of

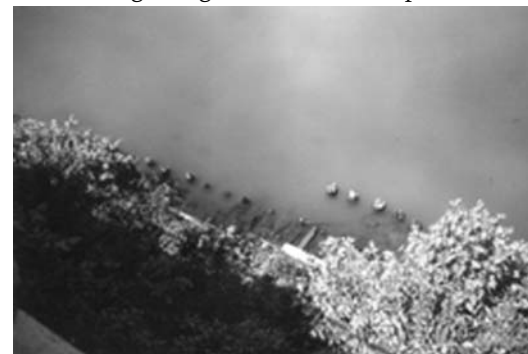
uses and areas associated with the Homestead Steel Works. It is important to note that the central missing resource within this ensemble is the steel mill itself, which was demolished in the 1980s. The following descriptions indicate the location, current use and ownership, type of resources, current status, and formal historic designations of each key resource:

- **The Bost Building**, a designated NHL, was built in 1892. This three-story, vernacular brick commercial building is located at 621-623 East Eighth Avenue in Homestead borough. The property is significant as the headquarters of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers during the 1892 Battle of Homestead, and as the base for newspaper correspondents who covered the events. The building is adjacent to the site of a commercial multi-use development created after the demolition of the former Homestead Steel Works. The exterior of the building retains a high level of integrity to its 1892 appearance. It was listed as a contributing resource in the Homestead National Register Historic District on June 10, 1990, and listed individually as a National Historic Landmark on January 20, 1999. It is significant under National History Landmark Theme XXI in the area of Social and Humanitarian Movements. The interior has been rehabilitated and will include a labor history exhibit, archives and offices for SIHC, and a visitor's center for the Rivers of Steel State and National Heritage Areas.
- **The Battle of Homestead Site** is located in Munhall and situated at the riverfront of the former Homestead Steel Works. The site originally comprised 18 acres, approximately half of which is now underwater due to construction of a concrete river wall relatively close to the north side of the Pump House building. It was the location of the Battle of Homestead, which marked both the high point of craft unionism and the beginning of the non-union period in



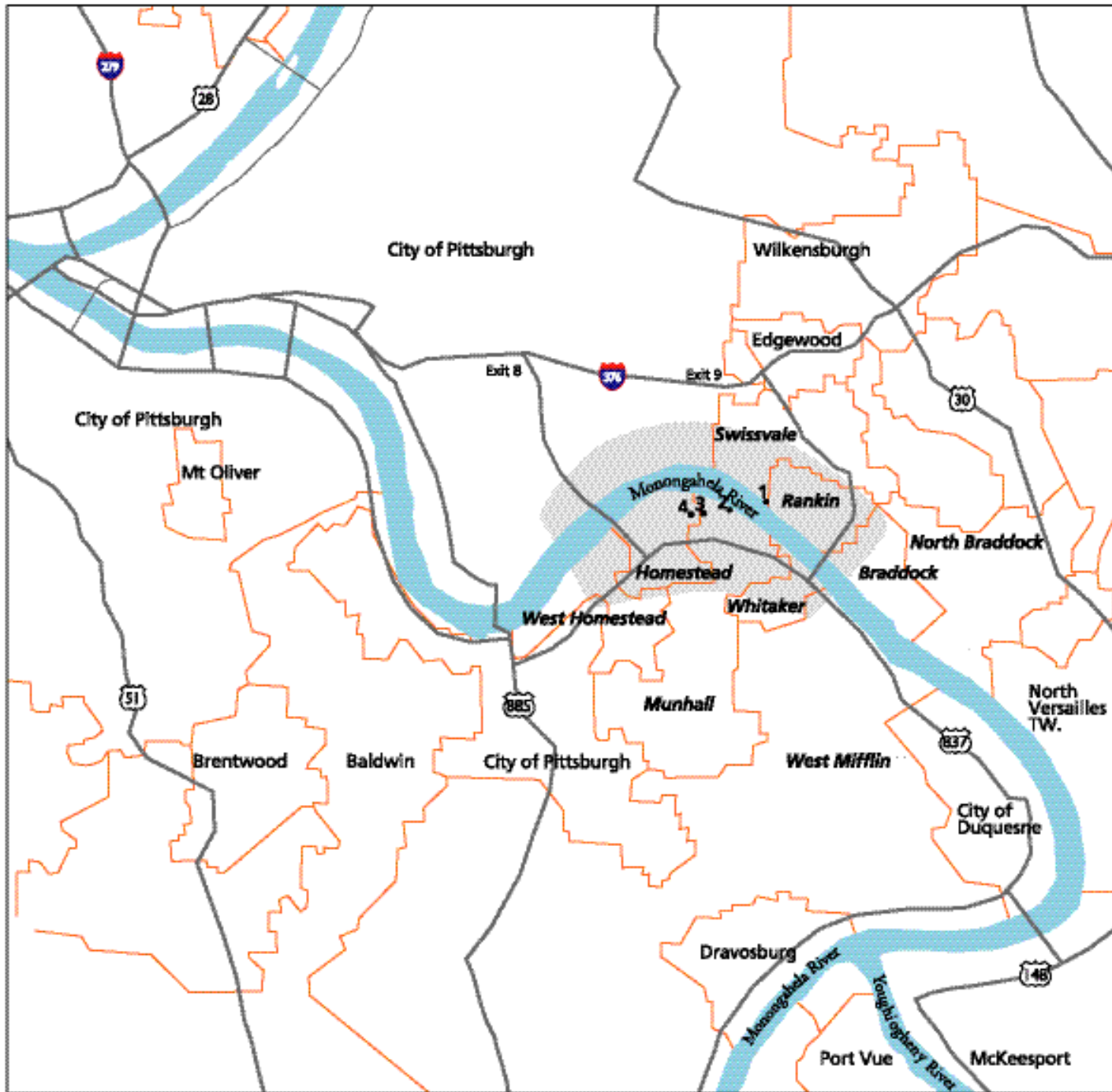
1890s view of Pump House and Landing Site. Rivers of Steel photograph.

Current view of river wall at Battle of Homestead Landing. Rivers of Steel photograph.



Battle of Homestead Landing, remaining piers. National Park Service photograph.

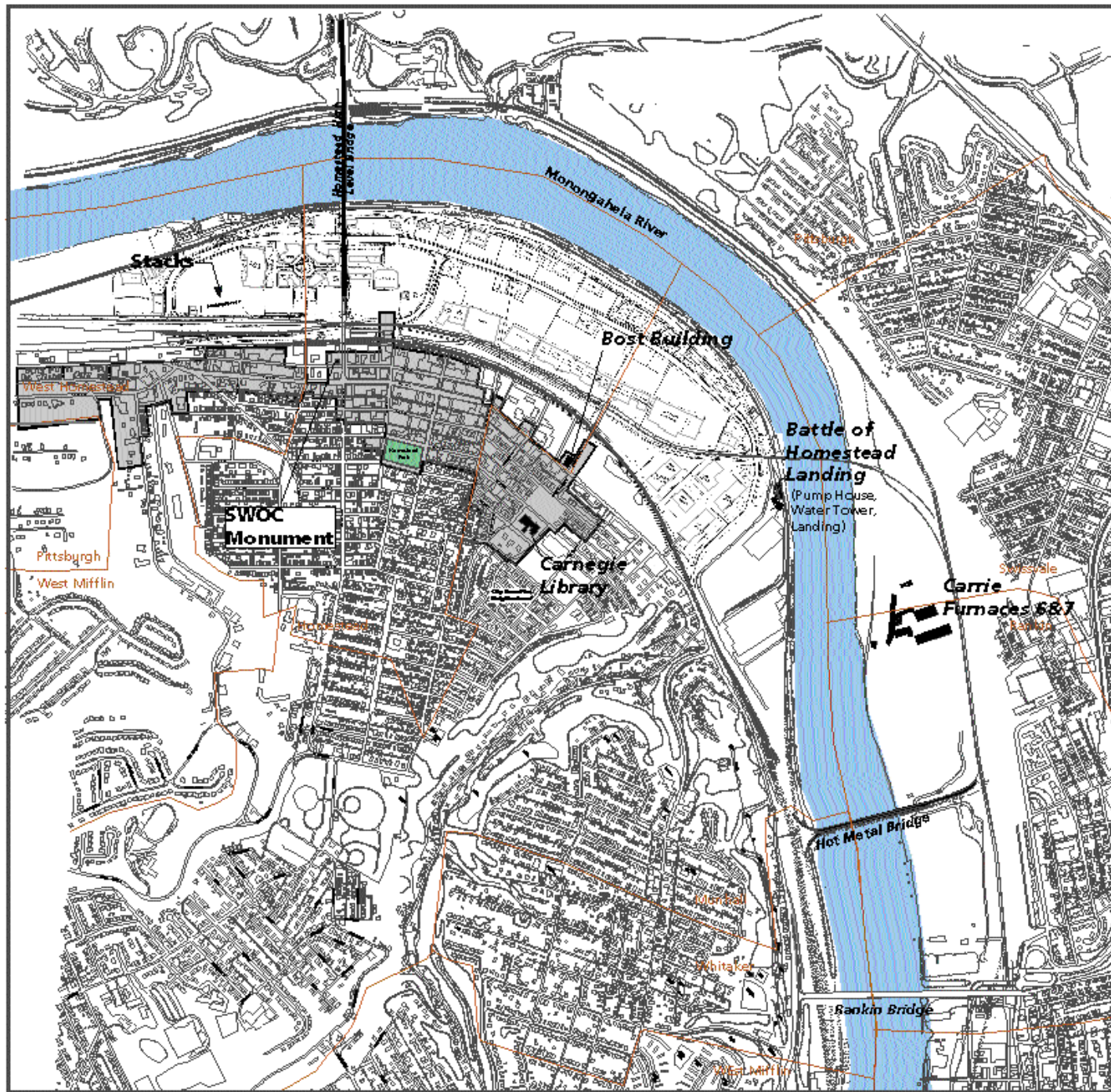
Figure 1: Homestead Vicinity



 Homestead Vicinity

1. Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7
2. Battle of Homestead Landing site
3. Bost Building National Historic Landmark
4. Homestead National Historic Register District

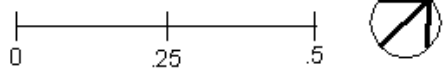
Figure 2: Key Historic Resources in Homestead Vicinity



Special Resource Study and
Environmental Assessment for the
Battle of Homestead and Carrie
Furnaces 6 and 7

Homestead National
Register Historic District

National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
Approximate Scale in Miles





Carrie Furnaces 6 & 7. National Park Service photograph.



Carrie Furnaces 6 & 7, casting floor. National Park Service photograph.

the steel industry from 1892 to 1936-1937. The battle was a direct engagement between Pinkerton Detective Agency employees hired by Carnegie Steel and Homestead Works employees and their allies and families. The battle took place on July 6, 1892, with the Pinkerton Agents firing weapons from a barge on the river and the steel workers fighting back from the land.

Since the time of the battle, the riverfront landscape has been drastically altered by the addition of fill and concrete retaining walls on the riverbank. The site was denied NHL designation because of the lack of integrity caused by changes to the river edge landscape, where the battle occurred, and to related structures. Other site features include an 1892 brick Pump House building, which was present during the battle but modified from its 1892 appearance and configuration; approximately fifty circa 1883 wooden pilings, also present during the battle, which are visible just under the water at the river's edge; and an 1893 steel cylinder water tower. The previous landowner has rehabilitated the Pump House, and it is now accessible to the public. The SIHC hopes to create a boat landing at this location to make this site part of a "Big Steel Journey" that is intended to be an important part of the visitor experience.

- **Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 and the Hot Metal Bridge.** Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 and their associated structures are located on a portion of a 35-acre site along the north bank of the Monongahela River in Swissvale and Rankin boroughs. Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 were built in 1906-1907 in order to expand the capacity of the existing Carrie Furnace Plant.

The original site was purchased by Carnegie Steel in 1898. In 1900-1901, before selling its property, Carnegie Steel linked the Carrie Furnace Plant to its Homestead Works with the construction of a massive steel-truss bridge, the



8th Avenue view during the 1920s. Rivers of Steel.



Current view of 8th Avenue. Rivers of Steel photograph.



Hot Metal Bridge. NPS photograph.

Hot Metal Bridge. This bridge made it possible to establish a fully integrated steel plant; iron was produced at the Carrie blast furnaces and transported as molten iron directly to the steel processing plant on the other side of the river. When Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 went on-line in 1907, they represented the latest innovations in the blast furnace technology that had been developed in the Pittsburgh district during the 1890s.

Carrie Furnaces 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, built on this site between the 1890s and 1903, and their associated structures were demolished for new development. The site is now cleared except for Furnaces 6 and 7 and their associated structures, including the two furnace stacks and their ancillary equipment, hot blast plant, blowing engine house, AC power house, gas processing equipment, and raw material storage and handling equipment, including mechanical car dumper, ore yard, ore bridge and stock house.

The Carrie Furnace site is owned by the Park Corporation. Currently, the Allegheny County Redevelopment Authority is working on a redevelopment plan for the site, which spans the boroughs of Rankin, Swissvale, Braddock and North Braddock. Additionally, the Mon-Fayette Expressway, a major transportation project, may affect this resource as the North Shore Alternative (the preferred alternative) runs along the north bank of the Monongahela River and abuts the northerly edge of the Carrie Furnaces property.

- **The Homestead National Register Historic District.** The Homestead National Register Historic District is the historic link between the former steel works and the ethnically diverse communities of West Homestead, Homestead, and Munhall. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 10, 1990, it consists of residential, commercial, educational and religious buildings, monuments and parks. This district has also been designated a local historic district, with formation of a historic architectural review board with the ability to approve changes to properties in order to protect its historic character. The demolition of historic structures has been delayed by action of the historic district review board, which has shown its high commitment to preservation by joining in litigation against the proposed demolition.

The district encompasses more than 30 city

blocks in the boroughs of Homestead, West Homestead and Munhall and includes 478 contributing resources and 41 non-contributing resources. The district has national and state-level significance in the areas of architecture and social history, and its period of significance is circa 1890 to 1941. Although it was the scene of the 1892 Battle of Homestead, most of the buildings date to the next half-century, when U.S. Steel dominated the communities. All of the properties in the district were associated with the Homestead Steel Works in some manner, but those listed below (in addition to the resources noted above) have a particularly strong connection to the important interactions between labor and management in this area:

- **Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) Monument.** Located at 109 W. Eighth Avenue, Homestead borough, in front of Chiodo's Tavern, a worker gathering place little changed since the heyday of the Homestead Works, this four-ton engraved granite obelisk was erected on September 1, 1941, by SWOC to honor steel workers killed at the Battle of Homestead on July 6, 1892. It features an embossed image of an open-hearth steel worker and the following inscription:

"Erected by the members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee Local Unions in memory of the iron and steel workers who were killed on July 6, 1892 while striking against the Carnegie Steel Company in defense of their American rights, Dedicated September 1, 1941."

The monument is one of several commemorations of the 1892 battle by steel workers and SWOC organizers during and shortly after the successful organization of the Homestead Steel Workers under the banner of the United Steel Workers of America in 1936 and 1937. The monument is included in the Homestead National Register Historic District, though not specifically mentioned in the nomination.

- **The Homestead Carnegie Library.** Located at 510 East Tenth Avenue in Munhall, the Carnegie Library is situated on land purchased by Carnegie, Phipps & Company in 1890 and used for encampment by the Pennsylvania Militia shortly after the Battle of Homestead in 1892. The library includes a Music Hall, Library, and Athletic Club. The library is directly and poignantly

linked to Andrew Carnegie and, although not completed until 1898, connected to the labor struggle itself. Carnegie promised Homestead a library in 1889, and initial plans were developed in 1892 before the battle. Built between 1895 and 1898, the library was dedicated by Carnegie in an emotionally charged ceremony in 1898 as a peace offering after the bitterness of the battle had faded. It is one of only three libraries (including Braddock, built in 1889 and Duquesne, 1901) that Carnegie provided with an endowment. Of these three, only the Homestead Library has served the community continuously since its construction.



Carnegie Library. Rivers of Steel photograph.

Several Other Resources are located nearby the foregoing resources. The **Carnegie Land Company, City Farm Plan Neighborhood** is a wedge-shaped section of Munhall extending from Eighth Avenue up the hill from McClure Street to the west and to Martha Street to the east, ending at Nineteenth Avenue. The section, which is partly included within the Homestead Historic District, features superintendents', workers' and middle-class housing dating from the 1890s to 1920s, the Carnegie Library, and St. Michael Roman Catholic Church. **Twelve brick smokestacks** are located on the former Homestead Works site and have been preserved and integrated into the multi-use development that was built between 1999 and 2001.

Context of the Study Area

There was substantial community disruption and adverse economic impact in the Homestead vicinity when the steel operations were shut down in 1986, and the area has struggled to cope with this change. Nearby Pittsburgh has been a national example of downtown and community recovery from industrial downsizing, although this process has taken time. Similarly, the communities of the Lower Mon Valley have had difficult times coping



S.W.O.C. Memorial. Rivers of Steel photograph.



Andrew Carnegie at dedication of Carnegie Library. Rivers of Steel photograph.

with changed economic circumstances. However, the future of the Homestead vicinity is looking brighter, due to a combination of circumstances that include aggressive public sector revitalization efforts, including the establishment of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, and an evolving development climate. On either side of the Homestead vicinity, major recreation attractions – Sandcastle water park and the Kennywood amusement park – act as magnets to pull recreational users to the area. The area is highly accessible to downtown Pittsburgh and metropolitan employment centers and the amenity of the reclaimed edges of the river is attracting development interest.

Concerted redevelopment efforts at the site of the main plant of the former Homestead Works have attracted an estimated \$350 million of development to this site, including retail uses, offices, and residential uses. Siemens Westinghouse Power Corporation is building a \$122-million fuel cell factory next to the Rankin Bridge and selected the site over other options because of preferred financing as well as the transportation and amenity advantages of the location. Across the river at Nine Mile Run, an innovative collaboration among the Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning, and a local developer has been prompted by a large Combined Sewer Overflow wastewater project that will clean up a former slag dump from the steel mill operations and create a 110-acre expansion of Frick Park and a \$243-million housing development. Designation of an Enterprise Zone that includes the Boroughs of

West Homestead, Homestead and Munhall will attract significant funding and incentives to assist in preserving the buildings and settings within the Homestead National Register and Local Historic District. The Mon Valley Initiative, which initially advocated for National Heritage Area designation, is attracting housing rehabilitation and infill funding to the area. Allegheny County is coordinating study of the development potential of lands surrounding the Carrie Furnaces 6 and 7 and the ongoing activities of Rivers of Steel are resulting in rehabilitation of the National Historic Landmark Bost Building, a broad range of cultural activities, and trail initiatives along the Mon River Valley.

All these activities are important signs of optimism and positive change in the Homestead vicinity. The community fought hard to forestall the demolition of the main site of the Homestead Works. Perhaps it is appropriate to the steel industry that, when huge manufacturing plants close, these massive steel-sided buildings are recycled for scrap and go on to live another day as future steel products. These large structures, unfortunately, are typically not suitable for reuse, as has happened with the well-lit masonry mill structures from the textile and other industries. Through the actions of supportive local interests, the several important buildings and settings described in Resource Description (pg. 4) are indicative of the scale of manufacturing operations, as well as the community and powerful labor history of the Homestead vicinity. This Special Resource Study addresses the appropriate federal actions to preserve and interpret these resources.